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ABSTRACT

A variety of adults were surveyed on alternative strategies for the State of Louisiana's minimum competency testing program. Both individual and group interviews were conducted with teachers, local school district supervisors and program administrators, parents, and state board of education members. Participants discussed what a state testing program should accomplish and suggested alternative testing strategies. The current testing program used the Basic Skills Tests (BST). Respondents wanted to retain its diagnostic capabilities and its use for student promotion and accountability. Additional concerns included comparison with national norms, remedial opportunities, policy making information, longitudinal research data, testing of higher-level skills, and not interfering with regular instruction. Four testing models were developed: state criterion referenced test (CRT) including norm referenced items; (2) adaptive state CRT; (3) state CRT based on a published norm referenced test; and (4) state CRT and published norm referenced test. The alternative to discontinue testing was removed from consideration. Some groups were interviewed repeatedly; participants were informed of findings of other groups; and some groups received training. This method was successful in negotiating agreements across a broad range of perspectives. (GDC)

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DETERMINING DIRECTIONS FOR A STATE TESTING PROGRAM: FINDING OUT WHAT PEOPLE WANT

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THOMAS G. CLAUSEN, SUPERINTENDENT

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INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the methods and findings of a study conducted by the Bureau of Evaluation of the Louisiana State Department of Education on alternative strategies for the state's testing program. The study was begun in April 1984 and is continuing through the present.

Background

Louisiana has a cluster of programs related to basic skills or minimum academic standards that comprise its Competency Based Education Program. These program components have developed over the past eight years and include the following:

1) State minimum standards in all subject areas for all grades (legislation mandates these standards in reading, writing, and mathematics);
2) Curriculum guides developed by the State Department of Education that correspond to these minimum standards;
3) Local Pupil Progression Plans defining the student promotion policies of each local education agency (LEA), which must describe how student performance on the state Basic Skills Tests is used as the principal criterion for promotion;
4) State testing programs that include an assessment program, which has no impact on student promotion and which is to be phased out as the Basic Skills Tests (BST) are introduced. The BST began with second grade students in 1982 and was designed to add a grade each year until all public school students, regular and special education, who are addressing the state

minimum standards in second through twelfth grade are tested annually in 1992. This legislation was revised in 1984 to limit the testing to second through fifth grades;

5) State-Funded Compensatory/Remedial Education Program providing remedial instruction through funds appropriated annually by the legislature to all students failing to meet the standards on the BST established by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In 1984-85 approximately 15,000 students who had been administered the second through fourth grade BSTs participated in this program with funding set at $257 per student per deficient subject area (language arts and/or mathematics).

Problem Statement

In March 1984 the newly-elected State Superintendent of Education directed the Bureau of Evaluation to conduct a study of alternative testing strategies for the state. This directive was in keeping with his campaign position that the "basics" were not enough for Louisiana and that the emphasis under his administration would be on educational excellence. A reconsideration of the testing program was also in agreement with other educational changes in the state. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education had established considerably more stringent requirements for high school graduation, the Governor had appointed a commission to examine educational excellence, and there had been some criticism that the current competency based program was too costly, encouraged "teaching to the tests," and had set standards that were too low to improve education.

The State Superintendent agreed that the current testing program was to be considered as one of the possible alternatives. The single constraint he placed upon the study was that it include information from parents, teachers, and local school district staff members.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The Bureau of Evaluation proposed a study that employed iterative group and individual interviews with key informants. The study was iterative in that the same questions were asked of all groups, successive groups were provided with written descriptions of the discussion from earlier groups, and groups were reconvened to consider their initial suggestions in light of the discussion that had ensued following their first meeting. The questions presented to each group and individual were simple ones:

- What should a state testing program accomplish?
- What are some alternative strategies for a state testing program?

Several considerations dictated this design. First, there was pressure to have a sample testing program model (or several models) prepared for public discussion in the early winter to permit time to develop legislation for the following spring. The design provided for input from those who had a vested interest in the program or who had expressed opinions about it in a format that would both yield information and allow for either highlighting differences of opinion between groups or identifying areas of agreement. Second, the design allowed for conflict to take place in a relatively controlled setting so that it could be resolved or so that sensitive areas could at least be identified before public discussion took place. Third, the design included opportunities for making the participants more knowledgeable about the state testing program and for developing a representative group that would have some commitment to whatever state testing program was proposed.

Table 1 shows the groups and individuals that were involved in the study and the criteria through which participants were selected. The participants were chosen to represent those who would be most informed about the state testing program or who would have the strongest opinions about it. The order in which interviews were conducted was also deliberate. If one envisions educational change as a ripple effect spreading from state-level decision makers through educational institutions to the general public and then back again to the policy makers, the order of the interviews attempted to mirror this process.

Two of the participant groups, teachers and parents, were given training about the current state testing program and associated programs before their interviews. Both groups proved to have limited knowledge about the test and programs related to it.

At each phase of the study the results were reported to the State Superintendent of Education. After members of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education were interviewed this group also received periodic reports on the progress of the study. Interested observers (e.g., the director of the state testing program, the Governor's liaison for education) were also invited to observe the group interviews as nonparticipants.

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TABLE 1. INTERVIEWS IN STUDY OF ALTERNATIVE TESTING STRATEGIES FOR LOUISIANA

DATE	PARTICIPANTS	SELECTION CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
March 20	Teachers and LEA Supervisors (N=31)	Teachers (selected by Superintendents of geographically representative LEAs) of grades affected by current and projected state testing Supervisors (from geographically representative LEAs) involved in administering or evaluating state test or related programs; especially those who were knowledgeable about testing.	Half-day group interview in Baton Rouge preceded by training for teachers on state test and related programs
April 3, April 4	Parents (N=25)	Superintendents of geographically representative LEAs nominated two parents each, one of whom was to be minority or disadvantaged.	Group interviews held in Baton Rouge and Natchitoches. Half-day interview preceded by half-day of training about state test and related programs
March 26 - April 19	SEA Program Administrators and State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members (N=14)	Administrators of all SEA programs related to state testing; Board members (a) suggested by Board President and (b) introducing regulations concerning state testing; Board staff.	Personal or telephone interviews
April 30 - May 1	Parents	Original participants reconvened.	Half-day group interviews in Baton Rouge and Natchitoches
July 12	Teachers and LEA Supervisors	Original participants plus those requesting to be included.	Half-day group interview in Baton Rouge

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FINDINGS

The findings are presented here under two major headings: the proposals for an alternative testing strategy that resulted directly from the interviews and the secondary outcomes of the study process itself.

Testing Strategies: Purposes of a State Testing Program

Table 2 shows the major purposes for a state testing program suggested by the three major interview groups: State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education members and Department of Education administrators; teachers and central office staff members; and parents.

All groups wanted to retain the diagnostic/prescriptive capabilities of the current testing program, and all felt that student performance on a test should be tied to LEA promotion decisions. Accountability considerations included a desire to place responsibility on students, teachers, principals, districts, and state programs. In addition to the current measures of performance on state minimum standards, the interviewees also wanted a test that would allow comparison of Louisiana student performance with national norms. They felt that the testing program should include some opportunities for remedial services to students identified as needing these. Only Department of Education and State Board informants were concerned with the testing program's providing information for policy making. This was paralleled by the desire among LEA staff members that the test provide a longitudinal data base for research purposes. All groups were of the opinion that the testing program should provide information that could

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TABLE 2. STUDY OF ALTERNATIVE STATE TESTING STRATEGIES FOR LOUISIANA
WHAT A STATE TESTING PROGRAM SHOULD ACCOMPLISH
SUMMARY

The following statements have been compiled from summary notes of group interviews of teachers/central office staff and of parents, and individual interviews of BESE members and SDE staff. The statements are not an analysis of the current Louisiana testing program, but, rather represent the collective opinion of those interviewed as to the accomplishments an ideal state testing program should achieve.

ITEM	Board/Department Staff	Teachers/Central Office	Parents
1. Provide diagnostic/prescriptive information about a child's strengths and weaknesses, help the teacher find out what the child really knows; help with classroom placement	X	X	X
2. Provide promotion/retention information	X	X	X
3. Provide accountability information about students, teachers, programs, and systems	X	X	X
4. Provide information about how well Louisiana compares nationally	X	X	X
5. Provide opportunities for remediation	X	X	X
6. Provide information for educational policy makers	X		
7. Provide information for preventive measures; address learning problems when and where they occur	X	X	X
8. Provide for continued broad participation in the testing program's development and use--teacher, parents, LEA staff	X	X	X
9. Provide a data base for research		X	
10. Provide for measuring performance beyond minimum skills; challenge the more able students (Note: While parents were strongly supportive of this concept, they did say that only the minimal levels should be tied to promotion/retention)	X	X	X
11. Provide for integration of testing into the total curriculum			X

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be used to identify high-risk students so that future academic difficulty could be prevented. And, all groups were in agreement that the test should measure skills or knowledge beyond the minimum standards currently identified and that parents, teachers and others should participate broadly in designing the program. Parents wanted a state testing program that would be integrated into the total curriculum, largely because they reported that teachers stopped regular instruction for several weeks each year to prepare their students for the state test.

These suggested purposes for a state testing program pretty well define a test that is all things to all people. They resulted, however, in four specific potential models for the state testing program.

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Testing Strategies: Alternative Models for State Testing Program

Four potential models for a state testing program that were developed from the suggestions of the interview groups are presented in Table 3. The Appendix to this paper includes the comments from the different groups that were used to develop the proposed alternative strategies. It should be noted that the last suggestion in the Appendix -- to discontinue all state testing -- is not included as an alternative. This suggestion was rejected by the parent and LEA groups at their respective second group interviews.

Alternative I describes a state criterion referenced test with norm referenced items spiralled into it. This test would be administered annually to grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 with multiple opportunities for eleventh graders to take the test since adequate performance would be a requirement for graduation. Alternative I-A is similar but includes locally administered screening testing at kindergarten or first grade

TABLE 3. PROPOSED STATE TESTING STRATEGIES

ALTERNATIVE I - STATE CRT/SPIRALED NRT ITEMS

DESCRIPTION:

- State-developed CRT based on revised Louisiana grade-level standards
- NRT items spiraled in (25-30/student)
- Diagnostic/prescriptive information on every student tested but NRT data only on State as a whole
- Administered to grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 with retake opportunities at 11 (required for graduation)
- CRT items developed by the State to test performance on revised Louisiana grade level standards; NRT items leased from test publisher so that each student responds to only 25-30 NRT items

PURPOSES:

- Assess individual performance on revised Louisiana standards and State-level performance on norm-referenced items
- Identify students needing remediation
- Provide promotion/retention criteria
- Serve as a graduation exit exam

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: LONG RANGE

- Review and revise State standards
- Select NRT items
- Revise tests at 3 and 5 and develop tests at grades 8 and 11

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: SHORT RANGE

- Select NRT items for incorporation into present tests at 3 and 5
- Prepare for spring 1985 administration of these transition tests at 3 and 5

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

- No method for identification and remediation of student weakness in early developmental grades
- What to do with students who have earned Carnegie units by grade 11 but cannot pass test
- Public reaction if NRT scores are low and do not rise

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- Provision of NRT information with little extra burden on LEAs
- State testing required at only four grades
- Cost effective

ALTERNATIVE IA - STATE CRT/SPIRALED NRT ITEMS/ EARLY INTERVENTION/MANDATORY RETENTION

DESCRIPTION:

- State-developed CRT based on revised Louisiana standards with NRT items spiraled in
- Diagnostic/prescriptive information on every student tested but NRT data only on State as a whole
- Individual screening/academic readiness testing upon entry into K or grade 1 with State-funded early intervention programs being provided to deficient students during K/1; mastery of specific readiness skills would be a prerequisite for entry into grade 2
- Administered to grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 with retake opportunities at 3, 8, and 11 (required for graduation)
- Mandatory retention for students failing tests at 3 and 8
- CRT items developed by the State to test performance on revised Louisiana grade level standards; NRT items leased from test publisher so that each student responds to only 25-30 NRT items

PURPOSES:

- Assess individual performance on revised Louisiana standards and State-level performance on norm-referenced items
- Identify students needing early intervention programs
- Identify students needing remediation or alternative educational programs at grades 3 and 8
- Provide promotion/retention criteria

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: LONG RANGE

- Review and revise State standards
- Revise and develop CRT, and select NRT items
- Develop tests at grades 3, 5, and 8 for 1985-86 with grade 11 added in 1986-87
- Develop or select grades K/1 screening and academic readiness testing materials and procedures for implementation in 1985-86

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: SHORT RANGE

- Select NRT items for incorporation into present tests at grades 3 and 5
- Prepare for spring 1985 administration of these transition tests at grades 3 and 5

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ALTERNATIVE IA - STATE CRT/SPIRALED NRT ITEMS/
EARLY INTERVENTION/MANDATORY RETENTION (CONTINUED)

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- Provision of State level NRT data with little extra burden on LEAs
- Early identification of deficits

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

- Public reaction if NRT scores are low and do not rise
- What to do with students' who have earned Carnegie units and cannot pass grade 11 test

ALTERNATIVE II - CUSTOMIZED STATE CRT WITH NATIONAL NORMS

DESCRIPTION:

- Customized CRT developed by commercial test publisher based on revised Louisiana standards; CRT would have national performance norms
- Both diagnostic/prescriptive and normative information provided at the student, school, system, and State levels
- Administered at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11
- Retake opportunities at 11 with passage of grade 11 test being required for graduation

PURPOSES:

- Provide diagnostic/prescriptive and normative data for each student tested
- Identify students needing remediation
- Provide promotion/retention information
- Serve as graduation exit exam

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: LONG RANGE

- Review and revise State standards
- Develop specifications for customized CRTs
- Administer tests at 3, 5, and 8 in 1985-86 with grade 11 testing added in 1986-87

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: SHORT RANGE

- Continue current program for 1984-85

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- Both CRT and NRT available for all students at four grade levels
- Little extra testing burden on LEAs
- Could replace LEA testing

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ALTERNATIVE II - CUSTOMIZED STATE CRT
WITH NATIONAL NORMS (CONTINUED)

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

- LEAs could be compared on basis of NRT performance
- Public reaction if NRT scores are low and do not rise
- No early identification and remediation
- What to do with students who have earned Carnegie units and cannot pass grade 11 test

ALTERNATIVE III - STATE NRT/GRADE 11 CRT/EARLY INTERVENTION

DESCRIPTION:

- Commercially published NRT (with the capability of providing individual diagnostic/prescriptive information) selected by State test selection committee for administration to each student in grades 3, 5, 7, and 9
- National normative and diagnostic/prescriptive information provided for each student, school, system, and for the State as a whole
- Individual screening/academic readiness testing upon entry into K or grade 1 with State-funded early intervention programs being provided to deficient students during K/1; mastery of specific readiness skills would be a prerequisite for entry into grade 2
- Test results used in promotion/retention decision
- Mandatory retention for students scoring below a certain minimum at grade 3 after being given one retake opportunity
- A separate grade 11 CRT with retake opportunities must be a component of this program as a requirement for graduation

PURPOSES:

- Assess student performance relative to national norms
- Identify students needing early intervention programs
- Identify students needing remediation or alternative educational programs at grade 3
- Provide promotion/retention information

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: LONG RANGE

- Review and revise State standards
- Select NRTs in view of revised standards
- Prepare for administration of NRTs during 1985-86
- Develop grade 11 CRT for administration in 1986-87
- Develop or select grades K/1 screening and academic readiness testing materials and procedures for implementation in 1985-86

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ALTERNATIVE III - STATE NRT/GRADE 11 CRT/EARLY INTERVENTION (CONTINUED)

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: SHORT RANGE

- Suspend testing during 1984-85

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- Could replace LEA testing from a cost perspective
- Early identification of deficits
- Provision of NRT data with little extra burden on LEAs

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

- Possible inconsistency with Louisiana instructional program
- Possible comparison of LEAs on NRT scores
- Public reaction if NRT scores are low and do not rise
- What to do with students who have earned Carnegie units and cannot pass the grade 11 test
- Could conflict with LEA testing and with established longitudinal data bases

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ALTERNATIVE IV - STATE CRT AND STATE NRT

DESCRIPTION:

- State-developed CRT based on revised Louisiana standards at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 with State-selected commercially published NRT at grades 4, 7, and 10
- Diagnostic/prescriptive information on each student tested on CRT; normative information on each student tested on NRT
- Grade 11 test required for graduation

PURPOSES:

- Provide diagnostic/prescriptive information at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 and normative information for each student tested at grades 4, 7, and 10; normative information for all LEAs
- Identify students needing remediation
- Provide promotion/retention information

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: LONG RANGE

- Review and revise State standards
- Select NRT at grades 4, 7, and 10 for administration in 1985-86
- Revise tests at 3 and 5 for administration in 1985-86 and develop 8 and 11

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: SHORT RANGE

- Prepare for spring 1985 administration of current grade 3 and 5 tests

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- More extensive NRT information than Alternative I
- Could replace LEA testing from a cost perspective

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

- More costly than Alternatives I and II
- No early identification of deficits
- Possible comparison of LEAs on NRT scores
- Public reaction if NRT scores are low and do not rise
- What to do with students who have earned Carnegie units but cannot pass grade 11 test
- Could conflict with LEA testing and established longitudinal data bases

and mandatory retention of students failing the test at third or eighth grade. Third grade was seen as a logical break between the acquisition of basic language and computation skills and the application of these skills to content subjects. Eighth grade was seen as the last point to identify students with basic academic deficiencies before they began the high school curriculum.

Alternative II called for the development of a customized state criterion reference test (again, to be given at grades 3, 5, 8 and 11) with national normative information. Unlike the spiralling of norm referenced items in Alternative I, this model would provide normative data about individual students. Alternative III involved selecting a published norm referenced test and developing a criterion referenced test of state standards that would be an absolute criterion for graduation. This strategy also included academic readiness testing for students at kindergarten or first grade and mandatory retention of third grade students not meeting the established test standards.

The final model, Alternative IV, required the administration of a state developed criterion referenced test at grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 and a state-selected published norm referenced test at grades 4, 7 and 10. Again, successful performance on the grade 11 test would be required for graduation.

All of these alternatives met the proposed purposes of providing normative information about student performance, measuring performance beyond the current state minimum standards, and affecting promotion decisions (or at least graduation decisions). Accountability varied from providing state-level normative information to providing it for each student (and thus every school and LEA). Most of the strategies

include some opportunity for remedial services to identified students or for early identification of students with potential academic difficulties.

Outcomes of the Study Process

The interviews had several results beyond the suggested testing program alternatives discussed above. First, as the outline of proposed testing program purposes shows, there was little conflict among the groups. It was expected that parents and teachers would have divergent views on accountability issues, but this was not the case. Second, the process was successful in negotiating compromises among groups when there was a potential for disagreement. Parents and State Board members, for example, wanted information about student performance on higher-level skills. Teachers and LEA supervisors did not feel it was appropriate to make promotion decisions on higher-level skills performance, and all groups were happy to suggest collecting this information but not using it in promotion decisions.

Third, the groups were able to give very specific suggestions about potential formats for a state testing program. The majority of these suggestions came initially from the central office supervisors, but parents, teachers, and policy makers were able to understand the suggestions quickly and to expand them into detailed plans. Groups that had originally been seen as sources for information about issues and concerns proved quite skilled at program planning.

Finally, the iterative interview process appears to have had the benefit of "defusing" some of the criticism of the current state testing program. The participants were selected to include those who had

expressed the strongest disapproval of the current test and its related programs. Having the opportunity to suggest how the testing program should be structured, and to then see the reactions of persons not associated with the State Department of Education to those suggestions, has not changed the opinions of critics but has made their criticism more constructive.

DISCUSSION

The total range of uses for which information from this study was employed cannot be judged at this time. The study planned to move from the interviews reported here to a series of open forums discussing state testing in early winter of 1984. That schedule was interrupted by the lengthy illness of the State Department of Education administrator with primary responsibility for receiving the study findings. There is a good possibility that the latter stages will not be carried out. At this point the future development of Louisiana's state testing program is unclear.

Several changes have occurred incidentally or as a result of the study. While the state minimum standards were under revision before the study was begun, the study made more policy makers aware of the revision. The end result of this revision process appears to be that of raising standards by lowering the grade levels at which skills mastery is expected. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has decided upon the basic format for an eleventh grade graduation test -- criterion referenced measurement of skills in courses all students can be expected to complete prior to the second semester of the eleventh grade -- and its decision was strongly influenced by the study. Finally, the Basic Skills Tests to be administered to grades three and five in the spring of 1985 include spiralled norm referenced items. This decision was made by the State Department of Education testing program staff, which observed the group interviews and acted in part upon the participants' suggestions.

Several factors should be considered by those interested in using a

similar approach. First, the group and individual interview information must be interpreted into readable reports by the technical staff conducting the study. These reports should be reviewed by interview participants before they are distributed. Second, such studies are labor-intensive. While the evaluators here feel that the information is accurate and useful, they also agree that this method takes considerably more time than would a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. Third, inservice training is very important to provide all groups with equivalent information bases before discussion begins. Although this was not tested, the evaluators believe that without such pre-interview training teachers and parents would have been far less vocal than they actually were.

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APPENDIX

Study of Alternative State Testing Strategies for Louisiana
Strategies Suggested for Consideration

The following statements have been compiled from summary notes of group interviews of teachers/central office staff members and of parents, and individual interviews of BESE members and SDE staff. The strategy statements in the first column represent the major alternatives identified by all who were interviewed; special aspects of the major alternatives as suggested by each of the interview groups are summarized in the remaining columns. No priorities or preferences for any of the alternatives were made.

STRATEGY	BESE/SDE STAFF	TEACHERS/CENTRAL OFFICES	PARENTS
1. Continue current program as designed with one level added each year	• Current program in place for short period; impact only now being felt; too early to assess effects	• Current program working fairly well for its intended purpose; in place for too short a period to fully judge its effects; major changes would waste present research opportunities	• Some favored annual testing & information current program provides; others advocated testing semi-annually need for retaining compensatory education programs stressed • Need for statewide standardized measure of student performance emphasized • Tie to promotion/retention deemed important
2. Continue current program with modification			
a. Test at specific grade levels rather than at all, every year	• Numerous combinations suggested • Early testing at K and/or 1 advocated for early intervention • Gates at 8 and 11/12 advocated for high school entry and graduation, respectively, with retake opportunities and remediation options	• Testing every child each year provides good diagnostic/prescriptive information, but cost may make this approach prohibitive	• Various combinations suggested • Gate at grade 12 suggested • Exempt parishes whose previous year's scores were high
b. Modify range/content of test	• Expand beyond minimum skills • Weight items in terms of relative importance • Expand content to include other areas	• Expand beyond minimums • Change format of reporting scores to grade levels or percentiles • Improve distribution of skills to be tested at grade levels involved • Include/do not include other content areas	• State tests too easy - should measure performance beyond the minimums • Include additional content areas, especially at higher grade

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STRATEGY	BESE/SDE STAFF	TEACHERS/CENTRAL OFFICES	PARENTS
. Change to a NRT program			
a. Local selection and administration of a nationally recognized NRT	• Test at specific grade levels, especially 8 or 9 and 11 • Retain those failing rather mandating remediation	• LEAs select and administer NRTs with SDE sampling results and aggregating to provide statewide data base • Funds for current state testing program should be diverted to LEAs to support local NRT programs	• Local NRT information useful in providing comparison data
b. Administer statewide NRT	• Test at alternate grades with gates at 8 and 11		
. Implement a program with both CRT and NRT characteristics			
a. Administer a combination CRT/NRT test	• Give readiness test at K • Administer CRT with natural assessment items spiralled into it	• Test should provide both diagnostic/prescriptive and comparison type data • Should address skills beyond the minimums • Weight in promotion/retention should vary--serve as gate 2 some levels but be secondary to local criteria at others	• Would like both diagnostic/perscriptive and comparative data • NRT information particularly crucial (at high school level) • Stressed eliminating duplication of testing at state and local levels
b. Administer both CRT and NRT at state level	• Single NRT would alleviate difficulty of equating different locally administered NRTs • CRT could be modify to include skills beyond the minimum		

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STRATEGY	BESE/SDE STAFF	TEACHERS/CENTRAL OFFICES	PARENTS
c. Vary weight of test in promotion/retention decision	• Give first test in K or grade 1 and weight heavily in promotion/retention and qualification for early intervention programs • Set up gates at grades 8 and 11 with test weighted heavily for promotional retention • At grades not tested use local criteria for promotion/retention decision		
d. Modify existing compensatory/remedial program in accordance with modifications in testing program	• Role of C/R should be to assist in removal of deficiencies • Require summer school for those failing BST • Provide transitional classes; develop alternative programs	• Continue offering remedial services to students identified as deficient but allow more local flexibility • Mandate summer school for those failing BST - workable only if money provided to cover transportation costs • Develop alternative programs for students repeatedly failing BST	• Continue to offer C/R services to students identified as deficient
e. Modify testing and C/R programs for special education students	• Test special education students at their functioning level • Allow special education teachers to do testing and to provide C/R to eligible special education children • Consider making C/R for special Education children a local option		• Individual testing advocated for eligible special education students
f. Change time of testing and population to be tested	• Begin at K or grade 1 • Test at beginning/end of year • Include/do not include non public schools	• Test at beginning/end of year • Begin testing early in school career • Include/do not include non public schools	• Test each child individually with retake options until 100 percent mastery reached on every skill

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STRATEGY	BESE/SDE STAFF	TEACHERS/CENTRAL OFFICES	PARENTS
Eliminate state testing: redirect funds	• Use current funds to enhance local NRT programs	• Use current funds to support local testing programs can be improved	• Use current funds to hire additional teachers and aides so that instruction can be improved.

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